

**Three Reports on the Condition of New York Schools
Public Forum**

**Friday, November 19, 2004 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
The State Museum Theater, Albany, NY**

ABSTRACTS

**Three Reports on the Condition of New York Schools
Public Forum**

**Friday, November 19, 2004 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
The State Museum Theater, Albany, NY**

**Uncommon Schools, Uncommon Results:
Case Studies of Three New York State Schools Closing
Racial Test Score Gaps**

Colin C. Chellman, Meryle Weinstein,
Leanna Stiefel, and Amy Ellen Schwartz

New York University

Abstract

This paper examines schools with atypical racial test score gaps, where non-white students have “beaten the odds” by performing as well as or better than white students.

Using a unique dataset of student ELA (English Language Arts) and math pass rates for all schools in New York State, we identify these atypical schools and describe them statistically. We then choose three schools for study using qualitative methods of inquiry that work with hypotheses from other qualitative studies of school-level test score gaps.

Findings of the qualitative work suggest a number of factors that may contribute to school success in eliminating gaps: teachers’ understanding of data and ability to link those data to instructional practices; strength of principal’s leadership skills; and high parental expectations. We recommend additional research that includes a comparison group of schools that are not successful in reducing test score gaps.

Three Reports on the Condition of New York Schools Public Forum

**Friday, November 19, 2004 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
The State Museum Theater, Albany, NY**

Successful school leadership in high poverty schools: An examination of three urban elementary schools

Stephen L. Jacobson , Sharon Brooks,
Corrie Giles, Lauri Johnson & Rose Ylimaki,

University at Buffalo - State University of New York

Abstract

In an age of accountability that requires 'No Child Left Behind', it is imperative that educators and policy-makers learn more about the practices and approaches employed by school leaders who have improved the educational life chances of youngsters, especially those from high need urban communities, who have traditionally been at greatest risk for failure.

This study examines three urban elementary schools, serving high poverty communities, that have shown improved student achievement scores during the tenure of the current principal. The focus of each case study is to identify and examine the practices of school leaders that may have contributed to improving student performance.

The case study methodology employed uses state data to identify schools with improved student achievement scores and then a multi-perspective interview protocol to triangulate the perceptions of administrators, teachers, support staff, parent and students at each of the sites.

Findings from these case studies are used to make recommendations for strengthening administrator preparation and practice, especially as it pertains to high poverty urban schools.

Three Reports on the Condition of New York Schools Public Forum

Friday, November 19, 2004 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
The State Museum Theater, Albany, NY

Staffing Classrooms: How Do Districts Find Their Teachers?

William Duncombe
Dana Balter
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Center for Policy Research

Syracuse University

Abstract

Forecasts indicate significant future teacher shortages both in New York and nationally, with certain fields experiencing extreme shortages. As districts nationally have begun to cope with increasing teacher shortages, one strategy they have used is to make changes to teacher recruitment and selection practices.

With this in mind, we have conducted a survey of New York State school districts in order that we may:

- Document teacher recruitment and selection practices used by school districts in New York.
- Collect information on the types of training and resources school districts would find valuable in managing the teacher recruitment and selection processes in their districts.
- Share information collected regarding innovative practices with the school districts and the State Education Department in order to enhance practices around the state.

Preliminary findings indicate that while a majority of districts use a comprehensive process, there is little variation in the use of “innovative practices” in the recruitment and selection of teachers across the state.

Three Reports on the Condition of New York Schools Public Forum

**Friday, November 19, 2004 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
The State Museum Theater, Albany, NY**

What do we know about the procurement practices of New York State school districts?

Cynthia S. Searcy
William Duncombe
The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Center for Policy Research

Syracuse University

Abstract

Procurement of supplies, materials, equipment and services is one of several important functions of school business offices. While spending for these items and services represent a relatively small part of district operating budgets, they are essential to the daily delivery of educational services. Managing procurement, however, is frequently a complex and time-consuming process due to laws and rules that govern public purchasing. Although state and administrative regulations stipulate how school districts must procure goods and services, very little is known about what happens in practice.

With the support of the New York State Association of School Business Officials and the New York State Council of School Superintendents, the authors surveyed 679 New York State school districts in an effort to document procurement practices and the major constraints, if any, school business officials identify as limiting their ability to purchase goods and supplies efficiently. The survey also identifies innovative purchasing techniques of school districts that have been used by state and local governments to realize significant unit cost and administrative savings.

Data from the survey are used to explore how purchasing practices impact the financial management of school districts. We find wide variation in the type of procurement methods used by type of commodity and size of district. Smaller districts are less apt to participate in “innovative” practices due to the lack of staff. Additional resources and technical assistance in the area of procurement should be targeted to small districts and high need districts.